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Letter dated 8 August 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 8 August 2007, addressed to you by Kemal Gökeri, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Baki **İlkin**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 8 August 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the letter of the Greek Cypriot representative addressed to you dated 22 June 2007 and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (A/61/964-S/2007/377).

In the face of the misrepresentations and distortions contained in the aforementioned letter of the Greek Cypriot representative, I deem it necessary to draw your kind attention to the following.

First and foremost, I wish to point out that the cleaning up of old, vacant and partly derelict buildings in Karpas region has been carried out in accordance with the legal duty and responsibility of the Ministry of Interior in creating a safer, more hygienic and healthier environment for all residents living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In this respect, all buildings that constitute threat to the public safety are identified and cleaning-up is carried out. Our relevant authorities have identified 280 derelict buildings as well as ruins in this region, some of which were merely single-roomed stables and haylofts. All work that has been done so far has been implemented for the sole purpose of public safety and the owners of such properties included both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. It should also be noted that this work is carried out not only in Karpas region but throughout the whole of Northern Cyprus where it is required.

Our study has revealed that some of the owners of such properties in the said region have permanently left the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus with their families. It should be noted that all foreigners, including Greek Cypriots residing in the North, who take permanent residence elsewhere have the option of transferring their properties to people of their choosing within one year of their departure. Should the owner of the property decide not to exercise this right, such property, by law, is deemed abandoned and becomes public property. The owners of such property are still eligible to apply to the Immovable Property Commission for an assessment of their abandoned properties in the North and to claim redress through the options available before the Commission, including restitution, exchange and/or compensation.

The relevant authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have worked diligently to contact the immediate families of the deceased owners of properties that were in an imminent state of collapse. Those buildings creating a severe threat to public safety were demolished after due notice was given to the immediate family or any other relative residing in the North.

I also wish to add that some of the heirs who claim to have inherited these properties have been unable to produce any documentation of proof to this date. The heirs, within a year of the death of their relatives residing in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, should start the necessary procedures for acquiring property rights for the estates. Otherwise, their properties will be declared as abandoned and considered as public property. Similarly, after the expiration of the one-year period, the heirs can file an application to the Immovable Property Commission where they will be provided with an appropriate redress in accordance with the law.

It is unfortunate that the Greek Cypriot administration is misrepresenting and exploiting, for political propaganda purposes, a routine clean-up process required by law and carried out for the safety of all residents of the Karpas area, Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot alike. As is the case elsewhere, it is the responsibility of the relevant authorities of our state to ensure that people residing in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus live in a safe and healthy environment. At the same time, property owners who feel particularly aggrieved by the action of the relevant authorities have a number of legal remedies available in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus whereby they can claim damages for the action taken by the authorities.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 19, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) M. Kemal **Gökeri**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus